

(d) whether the programme designed to remove regional disparities has not achieved the desired results; and

(e) if so, the precautions taken to avoid lacunae in implementation of the programme?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION AND MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (SHRI YOGINDER K. ALAGH) : (a) to (e) The planning and development of an area and allocation of funds for that purpose is primarily the responsibility of the State Government. Planning Commission have not identified any areas as backward *per-se*. However, Central Government is supplementing the efforts of the State Governments in this regard through the mechanism of transfer of resources under the formula used for giving normal Central Assistance to States; Special Area Programmes such as Tribal Sub-plan, Drought Prone Area Programme, Desert Development Programme, Hill Area Development Programme and Border Area Development Programme etc; and rural employment schemes such as Integrated Rural Development Programme, Jawahar Rojgar Yojana and Employment Assistance Scheme.

Removal of regional disparities in an essential objective of the planning process. However, the implementation of this objective is tempered by certain inherent historic and other characteristics of various regions such as differences in resource endowment, physiographic factors and geographical conditions.

Orphanages

* 528. SHRI MAHESH KUMAR M. KANODIA: Will the Minister of WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) the number of orphanages receiving financial assistance from the Union Government in the country at present, State-wise;

(b) the criteria fixed for giving financial assistance to them;

(c) the amount allocated for the orphanages during 1995 and 1996, State-wise; and

(d) the steps taken by the Government of ensure proper utilization of the amount allocated for the purpose?

THE MINISTER OF WELFARE (SHRI BALWANT SINGH RAMOOWALIA) : (a) The Ministry of Welfare is not implementing any scheme of running orphanages. However, 51 children Homes have been receiving grants-in-aid under the 'Shishu Greha Scheme' run by NGOs for promoting in-country adoption.

(b) to (d) Statement is enclosed.

Statement

The Shishu Greh Scheme of Government of India from 1992-93, meant for promotion of in-country adoption of orphaned, abandoned, destitute and neglected children is implemented through NGOs. The financial assistance is provided to voluntary agencies for maintenance of children of the age group of 0-6 years for their placement with Indian families through adoption, as per provisions of the scheme.

Financial assistance to meet the recurring and non-recurring expenditure to the extent of 90% of the total expenditure is provided to voluntary organisation/NGOs as per provisions of the scheme.

As the scheme is implemented through NGOs funds are not allocated State-wise under the scheme, but release of funds depends on receipt of applications in this regard as per provisions of the scheme. The grant is sanctioned to Voluntary Organisations directly. Annual allocation for the year 1994-95, 1995-96 and 1996-97 is as under :

Year	Amount
1994-95	Rs. 55 lakhs
1995-96	Rs. 100 lakhs
1996-97	Rs. 100 lakhs

In order to monitor the progress of implementation, performance and proper utilisation of grants, the following steps are taken by the Ministry :

- (i) Half yearly progress reports from voluntary agencies/Shishu Grehs;
- (ii) Inspection by State Government officers and their annual recommendations without which 2nd instalment is not released; and
- (iii) Annual Audited Statement of Accounts and utilisation certificate of funds provided by the voluntary agencies before further release of funds.

[English]

Death of Tribals

* 529. SHRI KODIKUNNIL SURESH: Will the Minister of WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) the total number of Adivasis (Scheduled Tribes) who died due to poverty during the last two years, State-wise;

(b) whether the Government of India have taken any steps for stopping poverty deaths of Adivasis all over the country; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF WELFARE (SHRI BALWANT SINGH RAMOOWALIA) : (a) The Ministry of Welfare has no information from any State Government regarding death of Scheduled Tribe persons due to poverty during the last two years.

(b) and (c) In view of the reply to (a) above, the question does not arise. However, in respect of steps being taken by the Government of India for alleviating poverty amongst Scheduled Tribes and monitoring of preventive measures against deaths of children in remote and backward tribal areas, a Statement is attached.

Statement

All the programmes of the Ministry of Rural Areas and Employment meant for poverty alleviation, such as Integrated Rural Development Programme, as well as Rural Employment Programmes such as Jawahar Rojgar Yojana, Employment Assurance Scheme etc. provide for specific financial and physical targets for STs. Besides Ministry of Welfare also provides Special Central Assistance to the Tribal Sub-Plan of the States for supplementing the State efforts for providing assistance to ST families for Family-Oriented Income-Generating Schemes meant to raise Scheduled Tribes above the poverty line. Loans are also provided by the National Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes Finance Development Corporation through its State channelising agencies for providing employment/income-generating assets on subsidised loan to members of the STs. Reservations in employment are also provided to the STs under the Constitution. It is further intended that different programmes for improving literacy amongst the STs and providing them with opportunities for vocational education and training will help them to cross the poverty line in coming years.

A Central Planning Committee under the chairmanship of the Secretary, Ministry of Welfare has been in existence since 1993 to monitor preventive measures against deaths of children in remote and backward tribal areas. This committee, in consultation with the State Governments, has identified 369 Blocks in 52 districts and 13 States which are vulnerable in this respect and where measures are required to prevent such occurrence. The concerned State Governments are required to prepare specific action plans for this purpose and to operationalise and implement these plans in identified areas, rigorously, particularly during the hardship season from May to September, every year. The measures to be taken under the action plans include setting up of early warning systems, and intensification of programmes in basic areas such as drinking water, health services, nutrition, public distribution system and employment generation. The concerned Central Ministries/Departments such as Ministry on Rural Areas and Employment, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Department of Women and Child Development, Ministry of Food Procurement and Distribution, Ministry of Civil

Supplies, Consumers Affairs and Public Distribution are expected to monitor the action taken in this regard by the concerned Department in the respective State Governments.

Essential Commodities (Special Provisions) Act, 1991

*530. SHRI ISWAR PRASANNA HAZARIKA :
SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA :

Will the Minister of CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether there are representations from the Traders Associations and different Chambers of Commerce for not extending the Essential Commodities (Special Provisions) Act, 1991 after the same expires in August this year;

(b) if so, the action taken by the Government thereon;

(c) whether the Government are reviewing the provisions of the Act, inconsistent with the ethos of liberalisation;

(d) whether as a part of the review the Government are considering pruning of the list of commodities; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (EXCLUDING THE DEPARTMENT OF ANIMAL HUSBANDRY AND DAIRYING) AND MINISTER OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION AND MINISTER OF FOOD (SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA) : (a) to (c) The Government have received representations from a few trade organisations against extending the validity of the Essential Commodities (Special Provisions) Act, 1981 beyond 31st August, 1997. Hoarding and blackmarketing of essential commodities are still prevalent and the situation may not warrant withdrawal of existing powers. However, the matter is under consideration of the Central Government in consultation with the State Government/UT administrations.

(d) and (e) Review of the list of essential commodities under the Essential Commodities Act, 1955 is an on-going process. As part of this exercise, Government are considering deletion of some items from the list of essential commodities.

Police Encounter in Connaught Place

*531. SHRI LALIT ORAON :
SHRI SANAT KUMAR MANDAL :

Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Delhi Police recently killed two